

minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I have joined several of our colleagues in a letter requesting that the Senate majority leader end the partisan wrangling and move forward with the veterans appropriations bill.

Our veterans have always been willing to man the front lines in the defense of this Nation and deserve to be honored for their service. From 2001 through 2006, this House increased funding for our veterans from \$48 billion to \$70 billion. This year the House came together in a bipartisan manner to increase funding for our veterans by an additional \$6 billion.

This is why I am so disturbed to read in Roll Call that Democratic leaders have made "a decision to delay sending the veterans bill to the President so they can use it as leverage to pass other spending bills."

In my mind, veterans and especially those waiting for services at VA facilities or working to secure their VA benefits are not bargaining chips. They are heroes. And we should not allow partisanship to interfere with our commitment to protecting their best interests.

HOUSE REPUBLICANS SHOULD WALK AWAY FROM PRESIDENT BUSH ON CHILDREN'S HEALTH CARE

(Mr. TOWNS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, last week most of the Republicans once again marched in lockstep with the Bush administration. I have just been informed that the President has vetoed the CHIP bill. That is a shame and it is a disgrace. Despite the fact that this Democratic Congress crafted a bipartisan bill with Republican input, most Republican Members chose to ignore the health care needs of 10 million children. It is a shame and a national disgrace.

The Children's Health Insurance Program has helped our Nation reduce the number of uninsured children. During each of the 8 years of the program, the number of uninsured children decreased, but over the last 2 years these numbers have actually gone up. Based on these troubling trends, this Democratic Congress did not believe that a straight reauthorization was enough. We needed to strengthen the CHIP program, and that is exactly what we did.

And now I have been informed that the President has vetoed it. That's a disgrace.

SUPPORT OUR VETERANS

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, this Democrat-led Congress

has yet to send one spending bill to the President. In particular, they have failed to pass funding for our veterans, and because of their inaction, our veterans are being shortchanged and denied needed resources and benefits.

Despite widespread support for the Veterans' Affairs spending bill, the majority is refusing to take final action. This delay is jeopardizing our ability to get the necessary funding and resources to those who need it most. The bill includes \$4.1 billion for VA hospitals and clinics, \$600 million for posttraumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury care, \$2.9 billion for mental health and substance abuse treatment for veterans, and \$480 million for research into prosthetics for wounded warriors and amputees.

We can all agree that our veterans deserve our utmost support, and as a grateful 30-year member of the American Legion, it is time for Democrats to work with Republicans for our veterans.

In conclusion, God bless our troops and we will never forget September the 11th.

THE PRESIDENT'S VETO OF CHILDREN'S HEALTH BILL

(Mr. CARNAHAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, during a speech at the Republican National Convention in 2004, President Bush said, "In a new term, we will lead an aggressive effort to enroll millions of poor children who are eligible but not signed up for the government's health insurance programs." But instead the President, just minutes ago, vetoed health insurance for 10 million low-income children.

The President's objections were without merit and did not warrant a veto. The bill does not expand the CHIP program. Instead, it maintains current eligibility requirements while enrolling more uninsured children. It is not a move towards "socialized health care." States will continue to receive funding through block grants, which nearly all States use. And this investment in the health care of our Nation's children is fully paid for, unlike the President's ongoing Iraq funding requests.

Mr. Speaker, I sincerely had hoped the President would have a change of heart and fulfill his promise to enroll children in this health care program. But he failed to do so. Now every Member of this House must vote to override the President to provide for the health care of America's children.

STOP PLAYING POLITICAL GOTCHA AND START SERVING THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

(Mr. AKIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I think most people in politics know is that the ratings of Congressmen are very, very low. And perhaps part of the reason for that is the public can see that we are playing more political gotcha than we are in really solving problems.

Today we have just seen an example of that as Democrat after Democrat condemned the President for this SCHIP bill, which has all these little hidden gizmos, among other things that we are going to provide health care to the children of illegal immigrants. It is a massive expansion of basically Hillary socialized medicine. And yet we are going to use this children's health issue as a way to play political gotcha.

We don't need to do that with the veterans bill. The House and the Senate have both approved funding for veterans, which comes down to \$18.5 million of extra money for veterans hospitals, for prosthetics, for our wounded soldiers. Those bills are just sitting, waiting.

Are we going to use that as another way of doing political gotcha, or shall we just start solving problems and serving the American people?

Mr. Speaker, for the past few years we have heard the Democrats in Congress say they support our troops and veterans even if they do not support the war in Iraq.

Yet, many of those brave veterans who served in Iraq, as well as other military campaigns, are being denied as much as \$18.5 million a day in veteran's care that was promised to them.

The Democrat majority has delayed a vote on a bill to fund veterans care. These delays are denying our veterans millions of dollars that would fund prosthetics for our wounded warriors and amputees.

Are the Democrats hoping to save a vote on veteran's health for later in the year? Maybe, they plan to attach wasteful earmarks to that bill?

Members of Congress, you can't say that you support our troops and veterans if you won't fund their care. It's time we make good on our promises. Give our veterans what they need.

DEMOCRATIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS PRIORITIZING THE NEEDS OF VETERANS AND SOLDIERS

(Mr. ALTMIRE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, this Democratic Congress has a strong record of delivering on our promise to the American people and providing real and meaningful change. And we have done so in a fiscally responsible way, instituting pay-as-you-go, deficit reduction discipline.

One area where we have made real progress for the American people is by supporting the men and women who serve our Nation in the Armed Forces. Under Democratic control, this House provided substantially more than the President requested for the new M-

RAP vehicles proven to save lives in Iraq. We voted to give our troops a pay raise that the President called "unnecessary." We strengthened military health care with the Wounded Warriors Act to clean up the inadequate care of wounded soldiers at Walter Reed and other facilities. And the Democratic House voted to provide the largest increase in funding for VA health care in the history of this country.

Mr. Speaker, these investments that support our veterans and troops overseas are just a few examples of how our Democratic Congress is taking America in a new direction.

ENERGY POLICY FOR THE FUTURE

(Mr. BOUSTANY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, a new cellulosic ethanol plant recently began production in my district, which will use high-energy sugar cane to yield ethanol. It is yet another reminder of the importance of domestic energy production not only for southwest Louisiana but for our entire Nation.

But we must recognize that we have a strategic dependence on fossil fuels and foreign oil. The farm bill currently working its way through Congress should not pick winners or losers but encourage innovation and entrepreneurship. It is a critical piece to our national energy plan with renewable agri-based energy solutions.

Home-grown energy as a part of our national energy strategy reduces our dependence on foreign energy supplies, helps the environment, and will promote our rural communities and keep them strong.

This Democratic Congress has failed to produce a viable energy policy. I challenge the Democratic leadership to work with us in Congress to produce such a viable energy policy.

NOW IT'S CHOLERA

(Mr. McDERMOTT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, let me talk about a surge in Iraq the President is not talking about. An outbreak of cholera is spreading across the country, harming and killing innocent Iraqi people. Five hundred new cases were confirmed in Kirkuk in the last 5 days.

The World Health Organization says there have only been 12 deaths so far, but there are 3,000 confirmed cases and 30,000 more Iraqis are sick. As a medical doctor, let me tell you that cholera is caused by human waste contaminating the water supply. In other words, the sewage treatment plants that we were supposed to rebuild that worked prewar are still not working after the surge. And innocent Iraqis are suffering.

When a Seattle church group sent me to visit Iraq in 2002, they asked me to

see firsthand how Iraqi children were suffering from the effects of the first war in 1990, the subsequent economic sanctions and how their suffering would only get worse in a new war. They were right.

Cholera is the latest example of a failed war. Instead of talking about the surge, the President should be talking about the scourge of cholera.

HIGH-TECH BOUNTY HUNTING

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, high-tech bounty hunting is now occurring in the United States. The Internet allows law enforcement to track down known sex offenders in the United States. States can find convicted sex offenders that must register under the new Adam Walsh Child Safety Act. Failure of a child molester to register is a Federal crime.

So these convicted sex offenders who do not register with local authorities are now being arrested using LexisNexis Internet tracking.

Florida police were hunting for a known sex offender. They traced him to Illinois, but Illinois officials claimed the offender was dead. The Internet search tools tracked the child molester to Indiana, where he was arrested for absconding and for failure to register as a known sex offender.

Studies show that convicted sex offenders often remain dangerous and become recidivists once released from prison. Sex offenders are now being held accountable for failing to register; law enforcement is informed of known sex offenders' whereabouts; future recidivism is prevented; and, meanwhile, children are safer because of high-tech bounty hunting.

And that's just the way it is.

□ 1030

IT'S TIME TO HOLD DEFENSE CONTRACTORS ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS

(Mr. MORAN of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, there are as many private contractors in Iraq as U.S. soldiers on the ground. Outsourcing our military should be a cause for concern for all Americans, but the recent uncovering of indiscriminate hostility toward Iraqi civilians and unprovoked killings by security contractors in Iraq is a siren warning that demands immediate attention.

Blackwater, a company that has reaped over \$110 million from the taxpayers since 2006 in U.S. contracts, offers one of the most egregious examples of what is wrong with our occupation of Iraq.

Last week, Blackwater security protecting State Department officials

opened fire in a Baghdad neighborhood, and in what appears to be an unprovoked incident, Blackwater guards killed at least 11 innocent Iraqi civilians and wounded 12 others. But because of a decree delivered in 2004 by our Ambassador Paul Bremer on his last day on the job, these contractors are granted immunity from Iraqi law and will likely face no charges at home.

This lack of accountability is anathema to our fundamental principle of equal justice under the law and exemplifies why the occupation of Iraq has been such a failure.

BIPARTISAN COOPERATION ON IRAQ IS THE BEST WAY FORWARD

(Mrs. MILLER of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, yesterday in this House, we took a great first step forward, I think, in finding bipartisan common ground on the way forward in Iraq with the passage of H.R. 3087.

The issue of our troop presence in Iraq has caused great debate across our country; it has polarized this Congress and our Nation. I believe this first step is a demonstration that a bipartisan way forward can happen. In fact, it must happen for the good of our Nation and our ultimate success in Iraq. We can draw that day closer if we in this Congress and we in America continue to work together to forge consensus instead of resorting to partisan attacks.

The report of General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker last month has given us reason for hope that progress is being made and our troops can begin returning home. As our troops so bravely continue their mission, let us continue ours and build upon the momentum that we started yesterday in this House. Let us all hope that the day is coming soon when our troops, who have protected our Nation and exported liberty, freedom and democracy, will come home. We owe them nothing less than our best effort to make this hope a reality.

PRESIDENT'S VETO THREAT OF CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE BILL

(Mr. CLAY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, yesterday this Congress sent the President bipartisan legislation to reauthorize and strengthen the Children's Health Insurance Program. This bill will provide 10 million low-income children with health care coverage, including 4 million uninsured children who are currently eligible for the program but not yet covered. Unfortunately, President Bush just vetoed this bipartisan legislation.

The President's opposition to this bill puts him squarely in the minority.